



Hawthorne Place District

500 block of West Hawthorne Place

Submitted to the Commission on Chicago Landmarks on August 3, 1988
Reprinted February 1996



CITY OF CHICAGO
Richard M. Daley, Mayor



Hawthorne Place District 500 block of West Hawthorne Place

This report, prepared in 1988, discusses properties on Stratford Place that were initially proposed for the district. During the course of the designation process the boundaries were changed to exclude those properties.

Just off the fast-moving roadway of Lake Shore Drive lies Hawthorne Place, a one-block enclave of large homes set back on large lots. When the street was first subdivided in the 1880s, its eastern end terminated in the waters of Lake Michigan. Access to the block was from the west, from the Lake View Plank Road, a road connecting the City of Chicago to the rapidly growing Town of Lake View. This street was later known as Evanston Avenue and finally Broadway. Hawthorne Place and the adjacent street to the north, today named Stratford Place but then known as Newport Street, were developed by the McConnell brothers whose family had resided in Lake View for some years and who were active in subdividing and selling property throughout the township. Hawthorne Place was the centerpiece of their efforts: it was the street on which the brothers chose to build their own residences. Several prominent architects were among those commissioned to build the fine residences of Hawthorne and Stratford places. Despite encroachments of recent highrise and institutional construction, Hawthorne Place and a segment of Stratford Place have retained their nineteenth- and early twentieth-century character.

Three McConnell brothers were involved with the development of Hawthorne and Stratford places. John (born in 1847), George (born in 1850), and Benjamin (born in 1857) were sons of Edward McConnell, an Irishman from a family in the silk business, emigrated to Canada in 1823. Settling in Illinois in 1830, he eventually took up residence in Chicago although he periodically lived in Springfield until the size of his family precluded frequent changes in residence. The family lived first on the West Side, occasionally spending the summer in Evanston or Lake View, a popular resort location after construction of the Lake View Hotel on the lake shore at Grace Street in 1854. A number of small villages were rapidly growing in this once-agricultural area, and the McConnell family apparently moved into the area around 1870; a 1949 obituary for Benjamin's wife states that he was the first graduate of Lake View High School.

North Side of West Hawthorne Place

- 530 – W.C. Davis House
(1909, Otis & Clark)
- 538 – H.N. Hudson House
(1916, Pond & Pond)
- 546 – John M. McConnell House
(c. 1885)
- 558 – Jos. D. McNulty House
(1923, H. Kenneth Franzheim)
- 560 – Henry Rietz House
(1909, Fromann & Jebson)
- 568 – Benjamin F. McConnell House
(1884; 1887 addition, Geo. Beaumont)
- 574 – Geo. E. Marshall House
(1884, Burnham & Root)
- 580 – A. Bacon House
(1937, Mayo & Mayo)
- 588 – Rowhouses
(c. 1970)

South Side of West Hawthorne Place

- 541 – Chicago City Day School
(1969; additions, 1973 and 1990)
- 567 – Herman H. Hettler House
(1892; 1895, choach house, Julius Huber)
- 577 – Hugh McKenna House
(c. 1913)
- 579 – Louis Ecker House
(1920, Andrew Sandegren)
- 585 – Rodney Granger House
(c. 1894)
- 587 – Nicholas J. Sheridan House
(1906, Borst & Hetherington)
- 593 – Geo. W. Mahoney House
(1908, Borst & Hetherington)

ABOVE: The boundaries of the Hawthorne Place District, as recommended to the City Council by the Commission on Chicago Landmarks on September 29, 1989.

FRONT COVER: The proposed district contains an impressive collection of late-19th- and early-20th-century houses, including the Hudson House at 538 W. Hawthorne Pl.

Of the three brothers, John was to be most closely associated with Hawthorne Place, the street on which he lived for forty-five years. After two years at the Chicago University, predecessor to the University of Chicago, he entered the lumber business but soon joined George and Benjamin in real estate speculation in Lake View. They acquired the Hawthorne and Stratford property in 1883. An August, 1889 issue of *The Economist* stated that these two subdivisions "have met with unusual success, both in the sale of the property and in the high character of improvements." *The Economist* attributed much of this success to the "liberal policy in improvements" on the part of the developers who provided water, sewers, and gas to their lots. Most of the lots had been sold by the time the article appeared, reflecting the increasing pace of development in the suburb of Lake View. Indicative of his reknown within the community, McConnell was elected mayor of the suburb. In July of 1889, Lake View was annexed to Chicago. 1889 was also the year in which George McConnell died, leaving the real estate business to his two brothers.

George McConnell may have built a house on Hawthorne Place in 1887; there is a newspaper reference to architect William Clay designing a house for him in Lake View. Benjamin had built his house in 1884 at 568 Hawthorne Place. John built a house at 546 Hawthorne Place, probably in 1885 or 1886, but there is a paucity of construction information for property outside city limits. Most of the houses on the street post-date annexation, but for two of the earlier houses, information is available because of the fame of their architects. George Marshall, president of a stationery company, built a house at 574 Hawthorne Place in 1884; Burnham and Root were the architects for this residence.

Other houses in the district were designed by less well-known local architects. The houses reflect the popular styles of the period, from the combination Queen Anne and Shingle Style house at 567 Hawthorne Place, built for lumberman Herman Hettler, to the four-square style of 530 and 538 Hawthorne. These houses, built shortly after the turn of the century, are very substantial examples of this widespread style, done in brick with stone and terra-cotta trim rather than the more common stucco. The house at 538 Hawthorne was remodelled in 1916 by the firm of Pond and Pond. Although the exact nature of their contribution is not clear, the third-floor dormer and the garage look like the work of the Pond brothers. Their practice encompassed all types of buildings, the best known being their settlement houses, particularly the buildings for Hull-House, one of which survives along with the original Hull mansion (designated a Chicago Landmark in 1974).

In 1906 and 1908, the firm of Borst and Hetherington designed the buildings at 587 and 593 Hawthorne. Although these two structures appear to be single-family homes, they are actually two-unit apartment buildings, as is 606 Stratford Place, a 1912 duplex by Huel and Schmidt with ornament reminiscent of the Arts and Crafts movement. The construction of new houses on Hawthorne continued through the 1920s and into the 1930s. In 1923, architect H. Kenneth Franzheim designed the Georgian residence at 558 Hawthorne for Joseph McNulty, vice-president and treasurer of McNulty Brothers Company, plastering contractors. Franzheim, along with C. Howard Crane, had recently designed the Harris and Selwyn Theaters in downtown Chicago (designated a Chicago Landmark in 1983). Mayo and Mayo, a father and son partnership, designed the house at 580 Hawthorne for Dr. Alphons Bacon in 1937 in a stripped-down, "modernized," colonial style.

Although the character of Hawthorne continued to be predominantly that of the single-family home, there was apparently some threat of change in 1916, a time before zoning ordinances gave legal sanctions to specific types of construction in specific locations. That year, property owners signed a thirty-year agreement regarding new construction on the block. Setbacks, sideyards, and a specified minimum value for new buildings were detailed, as was the requirement that any apartment buildings look like single-family houses. In addition, the signers paid a sum of money to two property owners who apparently were planning some type of non-conforming construction.

Apartment buildings were built at this time and in later years on Stratford Place, on Broadway, and along Lake Shore Drive, then known as Sheridan Road. Planning for a shoreline thoroughfare dated to 1875 when a roadway was completed between Oak Street and North Avenue. By 1900, what was known as Sheridan Road and also as North Shore Drive extended from Belmont Avenue to Byron Street, and by 1911, the road was finished between Diversey Parkway and Foster Avenue. This road was developed by the Commissioners of Lincoln Park, one of the three park commissions that existed before the consolidation of park districts in 1933. By enactment of the state legislature in 1879, the Lincoln Park Commissioners were empowered to develop a shore drive from North Avenue to Fullerton Parkway, then the northern limit of the city. In 1892, a further action of the state legislature gave the Commissioners the power to condemn land for the drive all the way to the city limits at Devon Avenue. In 1895, land adjacent to Hawthorne and Stratford was taken by the Commissioners for this purpose. Ultimately, the drive would be continued northward through the suburbs, to Waukegan, and eventually to Milwaukee.

The shore drive, created in part on landfill, soon became a premier address in the city. With the value of the land and the opportunity for lake views, as well as automobile traffic on the drive that made living at street level somewhat noisy, the preferred type of construction from the 1920s through recent years has been the highrise apartment building. The eastern end of Hawthorne and Stratford places are occupied by tall apartment buildings. At the other end of the streets, a combination storefront and apartment building, typical of many of Chicago's neighborhood commercial streets, is found.

Hawthorne Place and Stratford Place are similar in many ways to other streets extending west from Lake Shore Drive. These street are quiet oases between the rushing traffic and highrise wall to the east and the busy commercialism of Broadway to the west. What sets Hawthorne apart is the high quality of their architecture. Despite the encroachments of larger buildings, and in the case of Hawthorne Place, a school, residences of distinction remain. Rare examples of the work of Burnham and Root and Adler and Sullivan are within the district, both altered but still of value. The district reflects the rapid change from suburb to city, offering an interesting compendium of building types from the large, rambling frame house to the more compact but still large brick house, reflecting various architectural styles that were popular from the 1880s through the 1930s.

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Developer Benjamin McConnell built his frame house in 1884 at 586 W. Hawthorne Pl. (top). His brother John built a brick house at 546 W. Hawthorne Pl. (bottom).





The picturesque character of the Hettler (top) and Marshall (below) houses, built in 1892 and 1884, respectively, suggests the relaxed, resort-like atmosphere of the block in the decade following its subdivision in 1883.



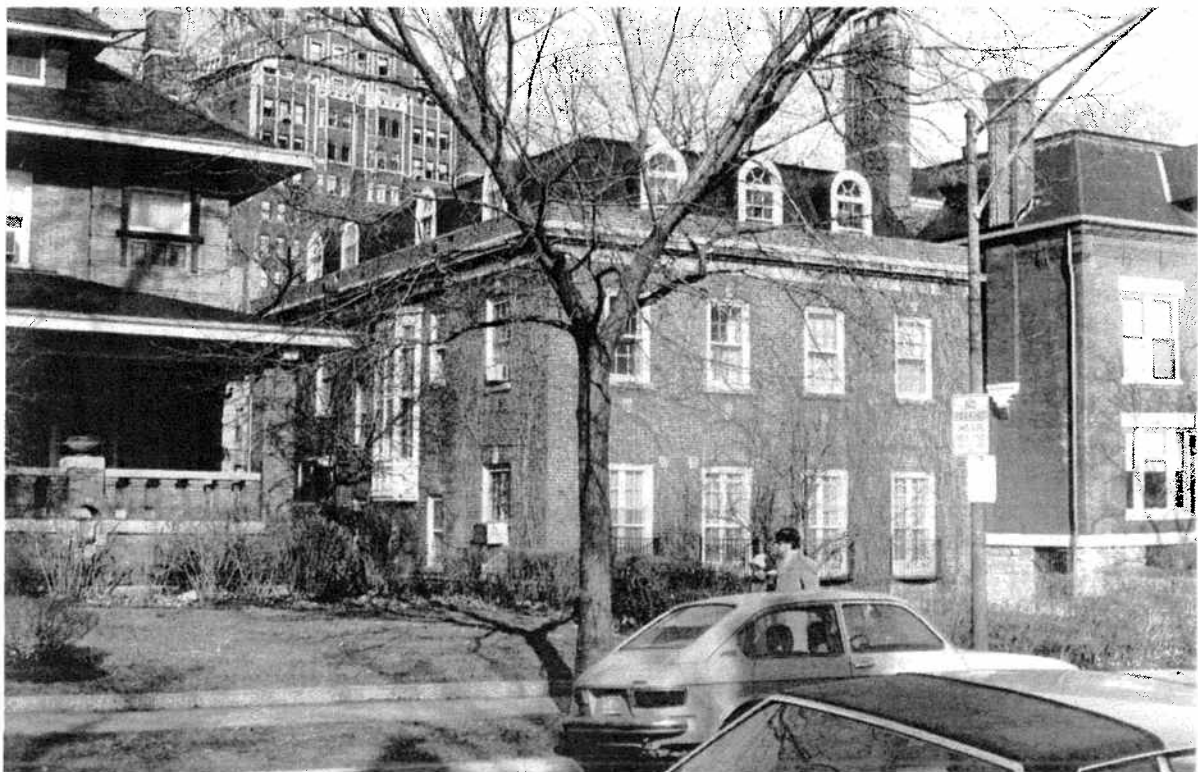


The houses at 530 (top) and 560 Hawthorne (bottom) are elaborate versions of the popular four-square house of the period.





By the time the last remaining lots were developed in the 1920s, architectural tastes had shifted to more classical styles, as illustrated by 579 Hawthorne (top) and the Georgian Revival-style residence at 558 (bottom).



APPENDICES

Criteria for Designation

In 1988, the staff of the Commission on Chicago Landmarks prepared the following discussion of the district's "criteria for designation" (as per § 2-120-620 of the Municipal Code of the City of Chicago). During the course of the designation process, the boundaries were changed to exclude the houses on Stratford Place, including one designed by Adler & Sullivan.

In 1985, residents of Hawthorne Place asked the Commission to consider designation of a district on their street and provided some information on the history and architecture of their properties. Last winter, the Historic Resources Survey was completed in the 44th Ward, and a district consisting of fourteen houses on Hawthorne Place and three houses on adjacent Stratford Place were identified as a potential district (an historic fence on Hawthorne, now surrounding modern buildings, was also included). Some residents of Hawthorne Place are very anxious to see their street designated because of concern over alterations now being made to several houses and also possible future demolitions.

CRITERION 1: Its value as an example of the architectural, cultural, economic, historic, social or other aspect of the heritage of the City of Chicago, State of Illinois, or the United States.

This district reflects the history of Lake View which was annexed to the City of Chicago in 1889. Before that year, the community had been first a popular resort area and then a growing suburb. The district illustrates both periods of development.

CRITERION 2: Its identification with a person or persons who significantly contributed to the architectural, cultural, economic, historic, social, or other aspect of the development of the City of Chicago, State of Illinois, or the United States.

The district is associated with brothers Benjamin and John McConnell, developers of land throughout Lake View in both its suburban and urban phases. Both brothers had residences on Hawthorne Place, and John lived there for forty-five years. John had served as mayor of Lake View during its years as a separate town.

CRITERION 5: Its identification as the work of an architect, designer, engineer, or builder who individual work is significant in the history or development of the City of Chicago, the State of Illinois, or the United States.

The district contains two houses by major American architects: Burnham and Root and Adler and Sullivan (possibly with the assistance of Frank Lloyd Wright who was in the firm at that time). Both are frame houses, a type of construction uncommon for both firms. These two houses have been altered but still retain interest as the work of important architects.

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Acknowledgments

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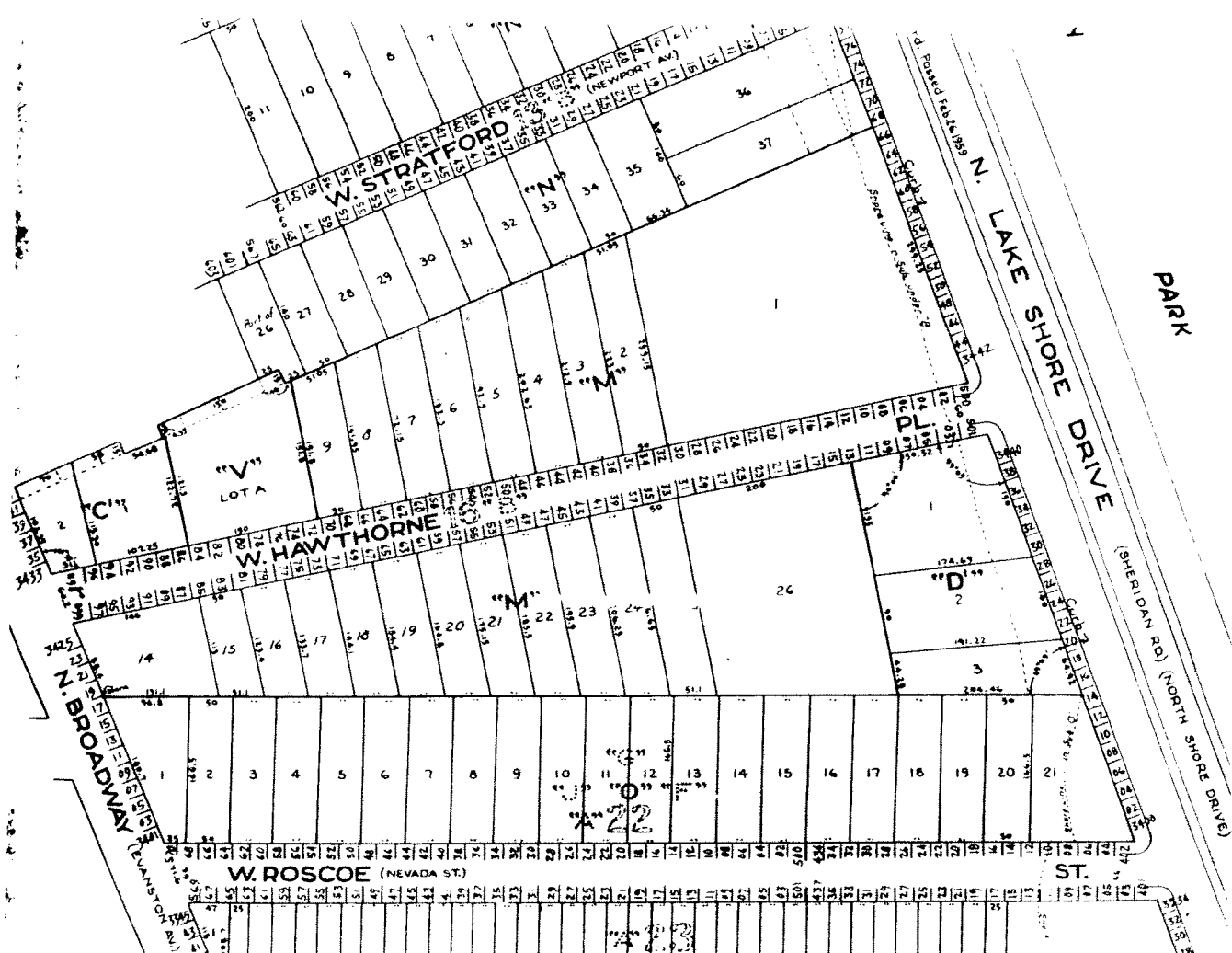
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Front cover; pp. 5, 6 (bottom), 7, 8: Patricia Casler
Inside front and back covers: Department of Planning and Development
P. 6 (top): *Mansion in the City*



"M"
 Sub. of Blk. 16 Hundley's Sub. of Lots 3 to 21 + 33 to 37 Pine Grove being
 a Sub. of frac. Sec. 21.40.14.
 Rec. Oct. 17, 1883.

"N"
 Sub. of Blk. 13 in Hundley's Sub. of Lots 3 to 21 + 33 to 37 (all incl.) in
 Pine Grove a Sub. of frac. Sec. 21.40.14.
 Rec. May 29, 1888.

"O"
 Jones' Sub. of Lot 22 in Pine Grove a Sub. of frac. Sec. 21.40.14.
 Rec. Apr. 21, 1888.

"V"
 Consolidation of parts of Lots 13 + 16 Hundley's Sub. in Sec. 21
 40.14.
 Rec. Mar. 31, 1903.

"C"
 Owner's Div. of Lot 13 in the Sub. of Blk. 16 + the S'ly 15 ft. of Lots 20
 + 21 + the S'ly 15 ft. of the W. 1/2 of Lot 22 in the Sub. of Blk. 13, all
 in Hundley's Sub. of Lots 3 to 21 + 33 to 37 all incl. in Pine Grove a
 Sub. of frac. Sec. 21.40.14.
 Rec. May 8, 1924.

Dec. 3369572.

Dec. 8407648.

A portion of the legal map of Hawthorne Place and adjoining properties, showing the original large lot sizes and the dates of various "subdivisions."

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